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PTQ4466

RELEASED IN PART
B1, 1.4(B), 1.4(D)PAGE 01 CARACA 03095 01 OF 02 031915Z
ACTION WHA-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	AMAD-00	CIAE-00	INL-00	DODE-00
	DOEE-00	PERC-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	VC-00	H-01
	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01
	NSAE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00
	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	STR-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	PMB-00
	DSCC-00	PRM-00	DRL-02	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/009W

-----F12645 031916Z /38

R 031835Z OCT 02
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7988
INFO NSC WASHDC
USCINCSO MIAMI FL
AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CARACAS 003095

NSC FOR LLORENS, AMB. MAISTO
USCINCSO ALSO FOR POLAD
AID/DCHA/OTI

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/02/12
TAGS: PGOV, PHUM, EAID, VE
SUBJECT: NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FORMS COMMISSION TO CONFRONT
RISING POLITICAL VIOLENCE

CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR CHARLES S. SHAPIRO FOR REASONS 1.5
(B) AND (D).

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SUMMARY

1. (C) INSPIRED IN PART BY THE U.S.-VENEZUELA
INTERPARLIAMENTARY FORUM IN MASSACHUSETTS SEPTEMBER 18-22,
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY LEGISLATORS OCTOBER 2 ESTABLISHED A
"PEACE AND DEMOCRACY" COMMISSION TO DISCUSS RISING
POLITICAL VIOLENCE. THIS ACT COMES ON THE HEELS OF A NUMBER
OF VIOLENT INCIDENTS OVER THE LAST MONTH, MOSTLY CONSIDERED
POLITICAL IN NATURE. IN ALMOST ALL, HOWEVER, THE FACTS ARE
SKETCHY AND THE MOTIVATION UNCLEAR.

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END SUMMARY.

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PEACE COMMISSION APPROVED

2. (U) INSPIRED IN PART BY THE U.S.-VENEZUELA
INTERPARLIAMENTARY FORUM IN MASSACHUSETTS SEPTEMBER 18-22,
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY LEGISLATORS ON OCTOBER 2 ESTABLISHED A
"PEACE AND DEMOCRACY" COMMISSION TO DISCUSS RISING
POLITICAL VIOLENCE, ACCORDING TO THE PRESS. THE COMMISSION
WILL BE MADE UP OF TWELVE MEMBERS, TO INCLUDE:

--NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT WILLIAM LARA (MVR)
--NA FIRST VP RAFAEL SIMON JIMENEZ (PODEMOS, EX-MAS)
--NA SECOND VP NOHELI POCATERRA (INDIGENOUS)
--NICOLAS MADURO (MVR)

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--DENIS PERAZA (MVR)
--ISMAEL GARCIA (PODEMOS)
--WILFREDO FEBRES (AD)
--PEDRO CASTILLO (MAS)
--NELSON CHACIN (COPEI)
--GERARDO BLYDE (PRIMERO JUSTICIA)
--CARLOS BERRIZBEITIA (PROYECTO VENEZUELA)
--JUAN JOSE CALDERA (CONVERGENCIA)

3. (C) [REDACTED] TOLD
POLCOUNS THE NAMING OF THE COMMISSION HAD BEEN STALLED FOR
WEEKS. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] SAID SOME LEGISLATORS HAD
WANTED TO CONVERT THE "BOSTON GROUP" INTO THE PEACE AND
DEMOCRACY COMMISSION. THE GROUP, HOWEVER, DETERMINED IT
WAS MORE IMPORTANT FOR THEM TO BUILD FROM THEIR EXPERIENCE
THROUGHOUT THE ASSEMBLY, RATHER THAN ONLY IN ONE
COMMISSION. MADURO'S REPRESENTATION ON THE PEACE AND
DEMOCRACY COMMISSION, HE SAID, WILL HELP REFLECT THE SPIRIT
OF COOPERATION OPPOSITION AND PRO-CHAVEZ LEGISLATORS BEGAN
TO DEVELOP IN THE FORUM.

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VIOLENCE MOSTLY ONE-SIDED

4. (C) FORMATION OF THIS COMMISSION COMES ON THE HEELS OF A
NUMBER OF VIOLENT INCIDENTS OVER THE LAST MONTH:

--THREE MVR PEASANT ORGANIZERS WERE MURDERED IN ZULIA STATE

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APPARENTLY IN CONNECTION WITH THE ONGOING LAND DISPUTES.
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THE MVR DEPUTIES CLAIM THIS BRINGS THE TOTAL TO SEVEN OF THEIRS PARTY MEMBERS SHOT IN ZULIA. GOVERNOR MANUEL ROSALES ANNOUNCED THAT SUSPECTS IN THE KILLINGS ARE IN CUSTODY AND THAT A NEW SECURITY TASK FORCE WOULD BE ESTABLISHED IN THE CONFLICTED AREAS.

--UNIDENTIFIED ASSAILANTS WOUNDED A CATHOLIC PRIEST JUAN MANUEL FERNANDEZ, SECRETARY TO IGNACIO CARDINAL VELASCO, ON SEPTEMBER 18. BALTAZAR PORRAS, PRESIDENT OF THE EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE, WHO CLAIMED THE AUTHORITIES HAVEN'T INVESTIGATED THE SHOOTING, WAS ACCOSTED VERBALLY ON SEPTEMBER 25 BY CHAVISTA SUPPORTERS DURING A SPEECH IN MERIDA. PORRAS IS CURRENTLY AT THE VATICAN TO REPORT ON OTHER AGGRESSIONS AGAINST CHURCH MEMBERS.

--AN OSTENSIBLY PRO-CHAVEZ MAN STRUCK OPPOSITION POLITICIAN HENRIQUE SALAS ROEMER OVER THE HEAD SEPTEMBER 19 BY DURING A PUBLIC CEREMONY IN CARACAS' PLAZA BOLIVAR. SALAS TOLD EMBOFFS OCTOBER 1 THAT HE BELIEVED HIS ASSAILANTS WERE PAID TO DISRUPT THE CEREMONY BUT DID NOT SPECULATE ON WHO ORDERED THE ATTACK.

--RUFFIANS BELIEVED TO BE CHAVEZ SUPPORTERS ATTACKED GLOBOVISION REPORTERS NEAR MIRAFLORES PALACE SEPTEMBER 22.

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ACCORDING TO REPORTER ROSSANA RODRIGUEZ, BOLIVARIAN CIRCLE
LEADER LINA RON INTERCEDED TO HAVE THEIR CAMERA AND CAR
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RETURNED TO THEM.

-- AN UNIDENTIFIED GUNMAN MURDERED LUIS ALCALA, A
RESEARCHER FOR A RETIRED MILITARY OFFICERS GROUP, IN A
WORKING CLASS CARACAS NEIGHBORHOOD SEPTEMBER 25. THE
GROUP'S DIRECTOR, COL. HIDALGO VALERO, SAID ALCALA WAS
RESEARCHING ARMED BOLIVARIAN GROUPS, AND HAS PRESENTED
EVIDENCE TO ATTORNEY GENERAL ISAIAS RODRIGUEZ AND THE
EMBASSY THAT ALCALA'S NAME WAS ON A HIT LIST THAT INCLUDED
LABOR LEADERS CARLOS ORTEGA AND MANUEL COVA, AND MIRANDA
GOVERNOR ENRIQUE MENDOZA.

-- AN ANGRY ANTI-CHAVEZ CROWD ASSAULTED SUPREME COURT
JUSTICE IVAN RINCON SEPTEMBER 25 WHILE HE ATTENDED A BURIAL
IN THE CITY CEMETERY.

--OPPOSITION ORGANIZERS CLAIM A LARGE BOMB WAS EXPLODED
BEFORE THEIR MARCH IN SAN CRISTOBAL, TACHIRA STATE
SEPTEMBER 28. MVR LEGISLATOR IRIS VALERA ANNOUNCED IN EARLY
SEPTEMBER THAT A GRENADE EXPLODED NEAR HER PARENT'S HOUSE
IN TACHIRA.

-- UNKNOWN, HOODED PERSONS USING PRO-CHAVEZ SLOGANS
REPORTEDLY KIDNAPPED ESTRELLA CASTELLANOS, HEAD OF A
PROMINENT ANTI-CHAVEZ WOMEN'S GROUP, SEPTEMBER 30 IN BROAD
DAYLIGHT AND HELD HER FOR A FEW HOURS. SHE WAS FOUND TIED
UP BY CHACAO POLICE WITH A WARNING MESSAGE FOR CHACAO MAYOR
LEOPOLDO LOPEZ WRITTEN ON HER BACK. A HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST
TOLD EMBOFF THAT CASTELLANOS SAID SHE ALSO WAS RAPED.
POLICE ARE INVESTIGATING, BUT SO FAR CASTELLANOS HAS FILED
NO FORMAL CHARGES. [REDACTED]

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OCTOBER 3 THAT THE WHOLE EPISODE WAS A FABRICATION AND PROVIDED A COPY OF CHACAO'S CHIEF FORENSIC EXAMINER'S REPORT, WHICH FOUND NO PHYSICAL EVIDENCE THAT CASTELLANOS WAS RAPED.)

COMMENT: VIOLENCE TROUBLING, BUT NOT YET CRITICAL

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SHAPIRO

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